the CROSBY voice

NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN BING CROSBY SOCIETY
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Hello again,

I hope that the year is progressing well for you as the half-way mark swings round.

As you will no doubt be aware, Bing's name has been quite prominent in the media of late, due mainly to two books recently published in the USA - the first by Kathryn Crosby and the second by Gary Crosby.

Gary's book has generated the most attention, probably because it is the most controversial in content. Having not read it yet (neither book having been issued in Australia at this point) I can't comment on it with any authority; however, I have received a copy of Kathryn's book and we will be covering it in detail in this issue of the Crosby Voice. In August, we will bring you a complete run down of Gary's book and if I included every press clipping I have received so far, there wouldn't be room for much else!

The coverage of Kathryn's book begins on Page 8 with a reproduction

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

It would be preferred if all matters could be dealt with by post through the club's official address of: PO Box 422, South Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3205, but should the need arise, you can reach members of the Executive Committee at their homes.

President: Bob Machliss, 24 Alston Grove, East St Kilda 3183. 527 2454

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of the front cover which includes a quite pleasant colour photo of Bing from what seems to be the early 1940's. Perhaps someone can provide a more precise dating.

Other highlights in this issue of the Crosby Voice include, on page 10, an interview with Kathryn published about the time of the books release in February and also, a transcript on another page, of a recent television interview supplied by Richard Pearson.

Whilst still on the subject of Kathryn's book, you'll find an article from the Australian women's magazine "New Idea" which uses the book as basis for a feature on Bing's relationship with Grace Kelly. Thanks to Ada and Ted Parsdissis for providing this one.

"Collectors Corner" has another series of interesting album covers covering some rare LP issues from the early 1960's. If you have any suggestions for record labels or other covers that you would like to see reproduced on these pages, drop us a line and we'll be happy to comply (if possible).

On centre pages 22 and 23 we feature a marvellous advertisement from a 1931 newspaper for Bing's Cremo radio broadcasts.

On pages 26 to 29, we feature another article from George Styles' 'Tempo' magazines. This time we have an edited version of a feature which appeared in 'Life' magazine in 1945. From the same issue, we also have an advertisement for "Australia's latest smash song hit" 'It's Crosby, who else could it be'. You may remember that we published the sheet music to this song a couple of issues back.

On pages 37 and 39 are a couple of most unusual photo's of Bing and it's fair to say that he's unrecognizable in both!

Our 'back page special' this issue features a number of cartoons and charactures of Bing that have appeared over the years. If you have anything you think may be of interest for our back page, please lend it to us and we'll be happy to reproduce it and return it undamaged.

May 3rd of course marked what would have been Bing's 80th birthday and although we did write to a number of radio stations and newspapers to advise them of the fact, the event did receive little coverage. Only Bert Newton on radio 3UZ responded with a half-hour tribute to Bing which included a telephone interview with yours truly. Thanks Bert and greetings to those new members who first heard of the Club through the tribute. Other news on the day elsewhere in the magazine.

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FUTURE FUNCTIONS
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THE BALANCE OF EVENTS REMAINING FOR 1983 - PLEASE NOTE THEM DOWN NOW.

June 20th - Film evening
August 15th - Joint film evening with the Al Jolson Society
September 17th - Social Function
October 17th - Film and Music evening
December 5th - Film Evening

JUNE 20TH - FILM EVENING "RHYTHM ON THE RIVER"

Now here's a Crosby movie that rarely turned up on television in the old days. It has a good cast and good songs. Joining Bing are Mary Martin, Basil Rathbone, Oscar Levant and Bill Frawley. Bing's musical director from radio and records, John Scott Trotter, plays himself. Songs include the title number, Only Forever, That's for me and Ain't it a shame about Mame.

Supporting the main feature will be a number of short subjects and once again, we have attempted to provide something for everyone! Providing that all the films turn up on time, these will include:

"Sex life of a polyp" starring Robert Benchley
"Derby Decade" starring Ruth Etting
"Wild Bill Hickup" starring Spike Jones
"Boogie Woogie Dream" starring Lena Horne
"D.W. Griffith interview" by Walter Huston
AND a couple of songs from Louis Armstrong - mid-30's vintage.

Venue is the theatrette of the Mobil Centre, 2 City Road, South Melbourne. You can't miss it! The Mobil Building is about 15 stories high and stands directly behind the new Melbourne Concert Hall, just a short walk across Princes Bridge.

BUT PLEASE - if you are coming by car, we cannot stress too strongly, try to get there early. Now that the concert hall is operational, parking is at a premium. Although the evening gets under way at 7.30, 7.00 p.m. is a very sensible time to arrive. Then you'll have plenty of time to have a talk or look through the piles of L.P's available to members at discount prices, some supplied by the club, others from the Bentleigh Sewing and Record Centre.

By the time of the meeting, we also hope to have copies of the next CROSBYANA LP for sale. This one, written up in our last newsletter, features a wartime broadcast of Bing with the Glenn Miller orchestra on one side and a selection of Bing's private recordings on the other.

PLEASE WRITE NOW and reserve a copy: PO Box 422, South Melbourne 3205.

Many members didn't bother to order the first Crosbyana LP and were disappointed when they turned up to our April 18th meeting to find that all had been reserved.

As per usual, we'll be having a door raffle with Crosby books and LP's as prizes. With tickets just 50 cents each or three for $1 you can't lose. (Well, sort of.)

Entry for members is $2, member families $5 whilst pensioners and under 18's get in for $1. Non-members are $4 a head.

MONDAY, AUGUST 15TH - JOINT MEETING WITH THE AL JOLSON SOCIETY

We're happy to report that although Al Jolson died 33 years ago, his memory is alive and well in Melbourne. And so we've decided to hold a combined meeting with the Jolson Society on the above date.

The most likely films to be shown on the night are:

"TOO MUCH HARMONY" from 1933 and
"MAMMY" from 1930.

No prizes for guessing which is the Jolson movie!

We screened "Too Much Harmony" two or three years ago and as it was well-received, we thought that it was time for another go round.

"Mammy" has a number of good Jolson songs, most of which he never recorded including 'Night Boat to Albany' and 'Who paid the rent for Mrs Rip Van Winkle?" (Who indeed!)

It should be a good night and we expect a good turnout. When the date gets a little closer, we'll supply you with more details and a reminder - for the time being, note the date down now.

FROM THE MARCH 20TH BARBECUE.

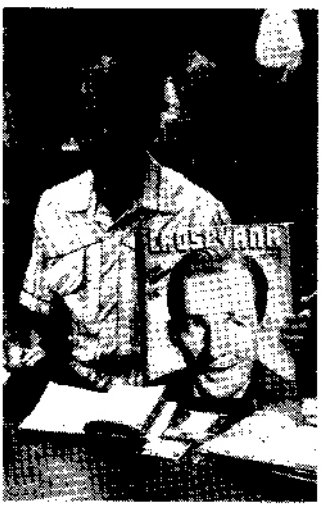
(Clockwise from top left.)

1. Jim MacManus in full cry!

2. A Les Saynor sign is a finer sign.

3. Keith Dorman seeking the elusive dollar!

4. Bob Paull prepares another batch of succulent barbecued chicken.



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PAST FUNCTIONS

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MARCH 20TH - CHICKEN BARBECUE

Despite our earlier fears that this function would not be too well attended, more than 40 members did manage to roll up. And as you can see from the photos on the opposite page, there was plenty for all - both from the point of view of chicken and Crosby!

Keith Dorman acted as doorman (whoops! no pun intended), extracting entry monies from all and sundry and selling unreserved copies of the Crosbyana LP.

Special thanks must go to Les Saynor for his help in preparing the entry sign for Wally Carson's front garden and also to Wally and Maureen for kindly letting us use their house again. Despite the drought (now thankfully broken) Wally managed to get his garden into quite a presentable state for the day.

Our very particular thanks must also go to Jim McManus for his sterling effort as all round spruiker and auctioneer. Thanks to Jim's efforts, the club finances were boosted by many an extra dollar.

APRIL 19TH - FILM EVENING - ROAD TO RIO/MONTE CARLO

The now familiar total of 80+ members and visitors turned up for our double-feature evening and were not disappointed.

'Monte Carlo', although more than 50 years old, proved yet again that true quality never dates - many of the lines were as funny today as they were when the film was first released.

'Road to Rio' also had its share of laughs, but to be perfectly honest, I found it not to be the funniest of the Road series. Over the next couple of years, we'll screen the remainder of the cycle and decide which, in our opinion, were the best.

As usual, we had a door raffle and happy winners of the "Crosby and Friends" 2-lp set and Ken Barnes' book respectively, were Joe Stevens and Stan Sherlock.

Once again, there were stacks of LP's for sale at specially subsidized club prices and these proved very popular with members.

My Life With Bing

by

Kathryn Crosby

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KATHRYN'S NEW BOOK

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"My Life With Bing" is possibly the most comprehensive book on Bing that has yet been produced. It covers just 12 years of Bing's life with Kathryn - from the years 1953 to 1965 which would suggest that a second volume is one day planned.

The book runs to more than 350 pages and interestingly, every left-hand facing page carries a photograph or photographs - many of them family pictures never before seen.

Kethryn has remarkable powers of recall, remembering conversations of thirty years ago, and the first hundred or so pages of the book detail her on-off courtship with Bing. In fact, it's not until page 107 that the wedding actually takes place!

Judging from the book, Bing couldn't have been an easy man to live with, although Kathryn doesn't reveal all that much of what he was like as a person. We learn that Bing was a lifelong insomniac, that throughout the 1960's he had recurring problems with kidney stones, that he quite strongly disagreed most of the time with Kathryn's desire to have a career of her own.

But the book doesn't tell us, and perhaps no book ever will, what Bing was like in private. There are a few hints, though. On page 267 we read that "Louis Armstrong once remarked without rancor that, although he had worked with Bing for thirty years, he had never been invited to the Crosby home. Somehow this remark was circulated with the implication of racial prejudice. What Louis was actually saying was that neither he nor any other entertainer had ever been invited to visit Bing. The fact of the matter was that Bing was a very private person, who neither entertained nor accepted invitations within the Hollywood world."

Nonetheless, the book does make interesting reading and it certainly helps chronicle Bing's life in the late 50's and mid 60's. I don't know whether 'My Life With Bing' will be issued out here; I guess that depends on sales overseas. On the following page you can read a U.S. newspaper interview with Kathryn on the book, while on page 12 we have a transcript of a recent TV interview, supplied by Richard Pearson.

Kathy Crosby: I must tell the real truth about Bing

Bing Crosby's widow won't talk about a book written by his son, Gary, with the help of a collaborator, that alleges the crooner was a terrible-tempered father who beat his oldest sons mercilessly. Kathryn Crosby, whom Bing married after his first wife, Dixie Lee, died, was apparently fighting back tears when she said haltingly, "I have written my own book about the most beloved man I ever knew, about the man that everyone who was associated with him regarded as a kind and warm human being. I wrote this book to tell the truth about a great man who brought happiness around the world to all who knew him and heard him."

In a long telephone talk with the People Page from her California home, she explained, "My book is called 'My Life With Bing' and it covers a period of 25 years, the first year we met, the four years we courted, and the wonderful 20 years that we were married. I just had to do it after he died because so many people called and begged me to do it. I did it all by myself. Now, I can't wait to come to New York and talk about it. I'll be at Macy's to introduce it. Bob Hope just called and offered to help me promote it. He said he wants the truth about his friend to come out. Bing had such wonderful friends. They all want to help get the true story about Bing Crosby out to the world."

She flatly refused to discuss Gary's book that is sharply critical of Bing. But others said she was very angry over Gary's portrayal of his late father. In a telephone talk with Phil Harris, she and Harris broke into tears over Gary's book.

Crosby had two families, his four sons by his first wife, and his three children with the former Kathryn Grant. Their eldest, Mary Crosby, won plaudits on her own on "Dallas" and son Nathaniel, 21, is a top golfer who will play in the Masters in Augusta, Ga. next month. Harry, 25, who is working for his master's degree in business at Fordham University, lives here and is working as a studio musician.

"I think New York is the most exciting place for a musician. Harry plays guitar and piano and holds a degree in theater from the London Academy of Music but he has never had a good business mind," said his mother. "So he went to Fordham and asked if he could make up courses to get into graduate school and they helped him. He'll get his master's April 20 and I'll be there with him. Bing would be so proud. He was so easy with the children that it was up to me to discipline them all the time."

So what's the book about? "About how you get married to the most beloved man in the world. Very difficult! By the time we got married we had been through every trauma there is. It's a fairy tale. I lived a fantasy. I met a man I admired. I was never a fan. I never liked his singing. I loved his speaking voice but after I met him I found out that he spoke just as he sang. It was the same. I was 19, he was 49. When we married, I was 23 and he was 53. Have I got a lot to tell? Well, the book weighs 4½ pounds! It's big, 8½ by 11 inches, and it has 182 pictures on each left page and 182 pages of text on each right page. I did it all by myself. I didn't know it would take so much work, first dictating and then on a typewriter." Could it become a movie? "It could make six or seven movies! It's a saga!" She was silent for a moment. Then added, almost in a whisper, "It tells the truth about a wonderful man."

Nat hopes to swing as Bing would sing

TROON, Tues. — Oh, how Bing would have loved to be here!

It would have been like all his White Christmases rolled into one.

It is now five years since the greatest crooner of all collapsed and died on a golf course in Spain at the age of 73.

But at Troon this week his son, Nathaniel, by his second wife, Katherine, is teeing up with the greats.

Although Bing cannot make it to Royal Troon, Katherine Crosby is here to watch 20-year-old Nathaniel, the American amateur champion, fulfil the ambition his dad held for him.

Bing never reached the heights that Nat has, but he was good enough to play in a British amateur title at St. Andrews in 1950.

And he also played in other quality tournaments as an amateur.

Katherine, 47, has the figure and complexion of a teenager.

She wears Bing's old golf cap as she follows Nat in his practice sessions at Troon and waits for the start of the great tournament on Thursday.

Young Nat has a plum draw as befits the American amateur champion.

He is alongside Seve Ballesteros and English professional, Howard Clark.

But it is Katherine who has been turning heads at Troon.

"I believe I am bringing him luck," Katherine said as she watched her son in action.

"In the three tournaments that I've watched him in he's come out tops in all of them.

KATHERINE CROSBY . . . turning heads at Troon.

"It was Nat's idea to invite me to Troon. I must be some kind of mascot."

Katherine said that sometimes she wonders whether she has fully accepted that final day of Bing's on the golf course.

"I just feel grateful that Bing and I had that last summer of 1977 together. We played a lot of golf and I got my game together for him," she said.

"At times I think he's still alive but away on tour."

And about that cute figure? "I practised ballet for many years and lift weights every day — and watch my diet," she said.

Katherine slipped off to watch young Nat in action. He will not win the British Open, but he is following a path his famous dad would have chosen for him.

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TV INTERVIEW WITH KATHRYN CROSBY

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(Thanks to Richard Pearson who supplied us a tape of this interview which occurred on April 18th on 'Good Morning America'. The lady asking the questions is Joan Lunden.)

JOAN: Bing Crosby was surely one of America's best-loved performers. He was especially known and admired for his warm, tolerant, totally unflappable public style. Recently, Gary Crosby, Bing's oldest song wrote a book that showed his father in a much harsher light as a very distant, angry man who was very unkind to the children of his first marriage. Well Kathryn Crosby, Bing's second wife disagrees with Gary; she has also written a book of her own called 'My Life With Bing'. Good morning Kathryn, nice to see you again.

KATHRYN: Good morning.

J: Before I ask you about Gary's book, I'd like to begin by asking you about <u>your</u> relationship with Bing. Let's start with the courtship.

K: Well, it was turbulent. Probably because Bing looked at this 19 year old girl whose greatest claim to fame was being 'Miss Fat Stock' of the Huston Rodeo. And he thought: "Oh, that's really too young,"but we became friends because I was a columnist. I had a little column in a Texas newspaper and I interviewed him and when I got desperate, I interviewed him again. And that usually lead to an invitation to tea.

J: Was it true that he set a wedding date four times and didn't show?

K: There were at least twenty proposals. The first one was unfair. He said: "I'm going to ask you a question when I know what the answer is". And I said "Yes...? Yes..?" But he didn't ask the question and about three months later he said "Do you mean you would marry me?" and I said "Yes". It was about half-an-hour later when I realized that that snake-in-the-grass still hadn't proposed formally. He never went down on his knees but he did keep on asking and I always said "Yes" and nothing happened.

J: Didn't you actually set a date and then he didn't show up?

K: We set a date about fourteen times. I had trousseaus for every season of the year! I had a Valentine's day trousseau! I had a

K: Mother's day trousseau. I had every kind of clothes and finally when we got married, we hadn't spoken for a year...

J: Why?

K: Because I'd had it! He said "Would you like to go to dinner?" and I said "I've been to dinner with you, thank you very much".

J: So how did you get together?

K: Well he wrote me some notes and I didn't respond and then he called Aunt Mary and then I called her to say "Aunt Mary, any time or place you wish..."

J: Did that concern you then about your future with him...about what kind of a man he would be?

K: I knew what kind of a man he was. Everything we had in our four year courtship was exactly the kind of thing we had in our 20 year marriage. Once we'd lived through the courtship, the marriage was a piece of cake!

J: What was the marriage like, then?

K: Heaven.

J: You write in your book though about how hard you always tried to please him and how you never really knew what he expected of you.

K: Well that's because he was interesting to me.

J: But do you think that that kind of a trait made things difficult or awkward for him?

K: For him of course. And for me of course. Because you see, if I had known exactly what Bing was like, if I'd been able to pigeon-hole him, I'd have been very bored very quickly. Bing fascinated me; he fascinated everybody. And he had, within himself the ability to paralyse you with his voice.

J: Was he kind you you?

K: Was he kind to me? He was kind to everybody. Bing didn't know how to be stern. Alan Fisher put it best of all. Alan was our butler for 20 years and he was heaven. He said that "Mr Crosby's idea of discipline was to run around the room with a rolled up newspaper, shouting at the children "This has got to stop!"

J: So he never hit your children?

K: He couldn't discipline a dalmation. It wasn't fair. He spoiled them. Our philosophy was we gave them what they wanted and they spared our lives!

J: Of course, Gary Crosby writes a very different story, but you saw Gary and his brothers with Bing. What was their relationship like?

K: Gary and his brothers were very warm and free with Bing. They spoke a language that I called 'Crosbyese' - sort of Damon Runyonesque vocabulary about boxing and sports and all the games andstatistics. There was no blow-up as I read in Gary's book. There never was a fight that anybody ever knew about from the time I made the scene. There was an easy rapport between Gary and his father until Bing's death. And Gary and Barbara, his wife, were with us after the funeral.

J: A very different picture from Gary's book. Thank you for coming in and sharing it with us.

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Next issue - also courtesy of Richard Pearson - an interview with Gary Crosby - watch for it.

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NEW RECORD RELEASES

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GREAT SINGERS OF THE 30'S - FANFARE - LP40/140

This LP from the USA has turned up in town recently. It is most interesting to Crosby collectors in that it features, for the first time on LP, the second Woodbury show from 1934 that has been on tape for some years. Quality is, unfortunately, pretty bad, but the content is excellent. It features several songs that Bing never recorded including "This House is Haunted", "Good night, a thousand "Goodnights", "I knew You When" and "With My Eyes Wide Open I'm Dreaming". There's also a comedy sketch and a couple of commercials for good measure. Anything by Bing from radio from this period is wonderful, so if you don't have a tape of this show, then I suggest that you hunt out the disc. As a bonus, the producers have also thrown in the 'B' take of 'Stay on the Right Side of the Road'.

BING SINGS BROADWAY - MCA - MCL 1730

This new issue from the U.K. will be a welcome addition to any collection. It features a total of 16 tracks, virtually all unavailable for many years in any form. In the early 1950's, some of the tracks were collected and issued on two long-defunct LP's, but others were never reprocessed from the original 78 issues. The tracks on this new issue are:

The Eagle and Me, Evelina, I Love You (based on 'Ich Liebe Dich'), If I loved you (1947 recording, not, unfortunately the rarer 1945 waxing), Close as Pages in a Book, Just My Luck, Stay Well, The Little Grey Home, The Yodel Blues, The Big Movie Show in the Sky, If I Were a Bell, I've never Been in Love Before, I Still see Elisa, Stranger in Paradise, No Other Love, and Trust Your Destiny to a Star.

As some of the above have never been issued in Australia, it is hoped that this LP will make an appearance here soon.

PEACE ON EARTH/LITTLE DRUMMER BOY - RCA (UK) - 12" SINGLE

We mentioned the 7" single of these tracks in a recent issue, and indeed, imported about 20 copies for members late last year from the U.K. However, this 12" 45 rpm single is a longer record and in addition to the Bing/David Bowie duet, also features some of the dialogue from the TV show from which the number was taken.

Unfortunately, this record is no longer available in the UK and by the time we learned of its existence, it was too late to order copies.

BING CROSBY WITH JUDY GARLAND AND THE ANDREWS SISTERS - BLACK LION BLM 52003 - Dutch issue.

No details on contents of this record, but it features radio show material from the 1940's from all reports.

Further notes on 'Great Singers of the 30's - reviewed previous page.

It should be recorded that this LP contains other interesting radio performances from the 1930's. There's a track from 1936 by Al Bowlly with Monia Liter (And you Were Mine), plus contributions from Fats Waller and Red McKenzie.

The Waller and McKenzie numbers are supposed to be OK for quality but I'm told that the Bowlly track leaves a lot to be desired. Still and all, beggars can't be choosers!

The Story of the Voice heard by more people than any other in History

Bing, Inc.

Condensed From Life—Lincoln Barnett

When Bing walks into the National Broadcasting Company studios in Hollywood to rehearse his weekly radio program, he usually looks as if he had holed out on the 18th green and had by passed the locker room. No necktie is ever in evidence. His sport shirt airily hangs over his slacks. His brown felt hat relaxes on the back of his head. He is likely to be chewing gum and smoking a charred and potent pipe caked black with primordial ash.

He perches himself on a high bookkeeper's stool beside a microphone and wisecracks with musicians and sound engineers. When the time comes for him to sing he shifts his gum into one cheek, clamps his pipe between his rear molars and effortlessly exudes the velvety baritone phrases that have made him the best liked and best paid entertainer in the world.

The air of imperturbable composure which Crosby wears at all times, in public and in private, stems from the inner relaxation of a completely successful man.

No performer in history has ever achieved such ascendancy in so many media of expression. His films brought more money into motion picture offices last year than those of any other star. He topped all polls of radio listeners as the most popular singer on the air.

His recordings have outsold all others by overwhelming margins for the last ten years. His songs are heard daily in record concerts and short-wave broadcasts around the earth.

Computed financially, Crosby's artistry is stupendous. He is not only the No. 1 money-maker in Hollywood, he is one of the greatest money-makers of all time. His contract with Paramount calls for a maximum of three pictures a year at $150,000 apiece. His weekly radio broadcasts net him $7,500 for each half-hour's work.

The Decca Record Co. pays him royalties of about 2½ cents a disc, which last year totalled $300,000. From three sources alone Crosby thus derives an annual gross income of more than $1,050,000.

And Bing has numerous other financial interests. He owns real estate throughout Los Angeles. He has a 10,000 acre cattle ranch in Nevada and is part owner of another in the Argentine. He breeds and sells race horses. He is chief stockholder of the Del Mar Turf Club.

Discussing Crosby's earnings, his friend, Bob Hope, declared recently, "Bing doesn't pay an income tax any more. He just asks the

Government what they need."

Where some individuals clamber for success and wind up with ulcers. Crosby tends to belittle his abilities. He long ago ceased to worry about his thinning hair and non-retractable ears. When a friend warned him recently that his voice might be injured by his incessant pipe smoking, he grunted indifferently, "Oh, the kinda singing I do, you can't hurt your voice."

He has an acute horror of pretension. Although he denies all knowledge of classical music, he is often caught whistling phrases from operas and symphonies he insists he has never heard.

Crosby's lack of vanity is not, as some Hollywood cynics suppose, a kind of inverted affectation. He has always been suprised by the good things that come his way. When he was a boy, his mother had to drag him to a swimming meet from which he emerged with 11 medals. His brother Everett had to bludgeon him into trying for his first radio contract. His friend Jack Kapp, president of the Decca Record Co., has to badger him every time he wants him to attempt any new type of song. When Kapp asked him to make "Silent Night," Crosby retorted, "Who do you think I am, Lily Pons?" Kapp got his recording in the end by cagily suggesting that Bing turn over his royalties to charity, and to date some three dozen charitable agencies have benefited through the sale of more than 1,500,000 impressions.

On occasion Crosby's supreme nonchalance exasperates his friends. One afternoon two years ago his 20-room house in Hollywood burned down. After much telephoning, his good friend, Johnny Burke, located Bing at the Brown Derby as he was sitting down to dinner.

"Listen Bing," Burke sputtered over the phone, "before I say anything, I want you to know that Dixie and the kids are okay." Bing said, "Isn't that nice, Johnny? And how's your family?"

"Listen to me, Bing," Burke said, speaking very distinctly. "Your house burned down." "Oh, that old thing," Crosby drawled. "Did they save my tuxedo?"

Despairingly, Burke shouted, "On the level, Bing, your house burned down this afternoon. You'd better hurry out here right away."

Bing hesitated. "But I just ordered my dinner," he complained. Having accepted the fact that his house was destroyed and his family safe, he saw no reason to forego dinner in order to view a pile of embers. After eating he drove out and poked around amid the ashes until he spied one of his shoes, charred but not consumed. Inside it he found what he was looking for—$1500 which he had hidden for use at the race track next day. Nothing else was saved.

Crosby's prime professional asset is his extraordinarily agreeable, friendly, lyrical voice. It is completely natural. Dinah Shore once perceptively observed, "Bing sings like all people think they sing in the shower." He likes to sing. He sings while shaving, while driving a car and in every unoccupied moment of his waking hours. He never thinks about breathing, intonation or diaphragmatic control.

As a boy Bing took two or three voice lessons but gave them up when the baseball season began. He can read a score only in so far as he can see that the notes go up or down. But his sense of rhythm never falters, and the quickness of his ear astonishes musical associates.

To all his recordings Crosby imparts a simple dignity and depth of feeling which once moved a friend

of his to remark that he sings every song as though it were the best song ever written. Many of his non-jazz recordings sell with the year-to-year regularity of classics. In all, 60,000,000 Crosby discs have been marketed since he made his first record in 1931. His biggest seller is "White Christmas," 2,000,000 impressions of which have been sold in the United States and 250,000 in Great Britain.

Time and again Crosby has taken some new or unknown ballad and made it a hit singlehanded and overnight. The day after he sings a song over the air—any song—some 50,000 copies of it are sold throughout the United States. A few years ago Crosby's eldest son, Gary, liked an obscure number called "Little Sir Echo" and pestered Bing until he broadcast it. No one was more surprised than the publisher when "Little Sir Echo" suddenly soared to the top of the Hit Parade.

Ever since Pearl Harbour, Bing has entertained tirelessly at camps, hospitals and bases. He has made innumerable short-wave broadcasts and transcriptions for troops overseas. He has broadcast in German to the Germans, who know him as "Der Bingle." Last summer he sang to soldiers in the front lines. One day he inadvertently jeeped into enemy territory while hunting a forward outpost to sing for ten members of an anti-aircraft battery. In London, crowds mobbed a restaurant in which he was dining and refused to disperse until he appeared at a window and sang "Pennies from Heaven."

Crosby is adept at all athletics. He rises between six and seven in order to play golf before going to work. Since few of his friends share his liking for exercise at dawn he plays with caddies. He has won many golf tournaments and might easily be in the top flight of U.S. amateurs if his energies were less dispersed.

Crosby contrives to spend some time every day with his four sons. They are tough kids but obey implicitly when he raises his voice a half-tone. Afternoons he plays baseball with them, evenings he likes to tell them odd bedtime stories of his own devising. For example, in the Crosby version Little Red Riding Hood is a jockey, the wolf is a crooked starter and Grandmother is the racing commissioner.

Precisely what the future holds for Crosby no one can conjecture. His star is still in the ascendant. His contract with Decca runs until 1950. His contract with Paramount runs until 1954. Records which he made ten years ago are selling better than ever before. Crosby, however, seldom bothers to contemplate his future. If ever a day should dawn when the public wearies of him, he will complacently go right on singing—to himself.

Hit Parade Songs . . .
Always Introduced by

PARAMOUNT PICTURES

Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour in
"ROAD TO UTOPIA"
At the Sydney State

presenting these numbers—"Put it There, Pal", "Suddenly it's Spring", "Personality".

ON TOP AGAIN

ALL HIT PARADES

IT IS CROSBY

WHO ELSE COULD IT BE?

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JAMES CAGNEY ON BING CROSBY

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(Taken from the book "Cagney on Cagney", this extract was kindly supplied by member Clem Parkinson.)

"Another group occupying our attention in 1942 was the Actors' Committee of the National Victory Committee. As chairman of that unit I can attest that we did a lot of night work. I remember Porter Hall saying that our epitath should read "Committeed to death". But it was little enough we were doing for the war effort, and as was only fitting, a number of us were called together to go out on the road to plug the sale of war bonds. This was the Victory Caravan, which went cross-country for three weeks. We had quite a group. There were Cary Grant, Pat O'Brien, Frank McHugh, Laurel and Hardy, Bert Lahr, Groucho Marx, Charles Boyer, and others, plus the most beautiful assembly of gals anybody ever cast an eye upon. Among them were Claudette Colbert, Joan Bennett, Joan Blondell, Arlene Whelan, Olivia de Havilland - such beauties. Bob Hope was our emcee until Chicago, where Bing Crosby took over.

I had never worked with Bing before, and here was a great opportunity to see at first-hand the way this performer did it. Bing had always been a remarkable fella to me, and I had always thought that everything he did was so relaxed and effortless. Not so. At our opening show at Soldier Field, Chicago, there was a crowd of 130,000, with 30,000 of them behind the platform we were working. Bob Hope was doing his stuff and he said, "Well, I know you're waiting to hear the groaner -", and the place went crazy. Bing walked out to a reception for which the adjective "triumphant" is inadequate.

He stood there in that very humble, charming way of his, wearing a brass-buttoned blue coat, rust trousers, brown-and-white shoes, and a light green shirt that seemed to verify the legend that he's colour blind. After the audience explosion died down, Bing said, "Whadda yez wanna hear?" and they exploded again until the stadium walls nearly buckled. After they subsided, he said "Ya wanna leave it to me?" and they blew up again. Finally, he said, "Hit me Al," and our orchestra conductor, Al Newman, started his boys off on "Blues in the Night." They had only played the first two bars when the audience went into rapturous applause once more. Bing finished that song, and never in my life have I heard anything like it.

I got the traditional goose pimples just standing there, listening. He did another; same thing.

And if I ever wanted a demonstration of how it felt to live through that old vaudeville phrase. "What an act to follow", this was it! I was next on the bill, waiting in the wings to do my little stint, "Yankee Doodle Dandy". Fortunately I had some good natural support in the form of my Civil War soldier's uniform, eight cute girls, plus eight American flags blowing in the wind. I danced my brains out, the girls waved the flags energetically, and the entire cast came out and joined in "The Star Spangled Banner," and this was, I can tell you, an experience.

But I've almost forgotten the point of the story, which is that when Bing came offstage, the perspiration on him was an absolute revelation to me. Here he had been to all appearances perfectly loose and relaxed, but not at all. He was giving everything he had in every note he sang, and the apparent effortlessness was a part of his very hard work.I can remember the first time I had any fixed opinions about Bing. Up at the Vineyard in 1938 I heard one of his radio shows, and I knew at once that this was a most extraordinary fella. I actually started to write a piece about him, "The Miracle Known as Crosby", but after a page or two, I stopped. I realized he was just beginning, and would add up to even more than he was. So I dropped it, thinking perhaps I'd save up my thoughts for the proper time. If this is the time, I'm glad to report my feelings about a man I always watch when he's available to public view."

****

Thanks Clem for supplying that interesting extract from the Cagney book. Unfortunately, as you didn't supply details of the publisher, I can't give those details here. The book was obviously written while Bing was still alive, as can be seen from the references to him. It certainly shows another side to the 'cool' Crosby personality.

****

* IRVING BERLIN'S 95TH BIRTHDAY

You may have noticed references to Mr Berlin's birthday on May 11th last. 95 years! What an amazing accomplishment for one of the 20th century's most endearing and enduring composers. No need to even list the songs he gave Bing. By the way, it's 73 years since Berlin cut his first record: "Oh! How That German Could Love" for Columbia in January of 1910! I think he's made 4 others since!!!

Tune in Radio's newest sensation

"BING" CROSBY

with the

Cremo Radio Program

EVERY NIGHT

(except Sunday)

Columbia Broadcasting System - Coast to Coast Network

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REPORT FROM THE B.C.H.S. 1983 TACOMA TRIBUTE
****

From Graham Pascoe:

"Apart from the pleasure of meeting Ken and Frank and the many members of the Bing Crosby Historical Society, my first Crosby-related activity was a visit to Gonzaga U at Spokane.

Ken had been in touch with Father Arthur Dussault, a vice-president of the University and a life-long friend of Bing, advising him of my planned visit. He met me at the Spokane airport and was very generous with his time. Not only did he show me around the Uni. and Spokane, but also talked with me about Bing and showed me numerous souvenirs (Crosbyana items) he has. Perhaps the most novel of these are four hairpieces Bing wore in various films.

In the Bing Crosby Library at Gonzaga, I was able to see through the Crosbyana Room in which a tremendous display of BC memorabilia is on show, including the first 'Oscar' I have ever seen. Bing's statue outside the library was 'sans pipe' at that time. The students regularly remove it as a prank, it seems.

My two days at Spokane were just great. Then it was back to Tacoma and the Tribute at the weekend. It was beaut to see the old movies which I am unable to view in Bathurst. On Saturday, I watched several of the Mack Sennett one-reelers and also 'Doctor Rhythm' and 'Double or Nothing'on video. 'Pennies from Heaven' and 'We're Not Dressing' were the Sunday film program. The latter was my favourite of the four feature films.

A delicious banquet on Sunday Night was followed by excellent entertainment by the Don Eagles group from Spokane who began with a musical autobiography of Bing.

Bing's sister, Mary Rose Pool, and her husband Jim, attended all of the functions and I made use of many opportunities to speak with them. Jim, and several of the BCHS members, had been to Australia in the Second World War and were very interested to talk about things 'down under'.

P.S. The appeal cheque had not arrived by the time I left Tacoma."

The 'appeal cheque' referred to in Graham's letter was, in fact, the results of the appeal we launched in the last 'Crosby Voice' to help the B.C.H.S. purchase Bing's childhood home in Tacoma.

It was our intention to supply Graham with the cheque to hand to Ken at the Tribute. However, our April 19th meeting presented us with the opportunity of collecting additional funds and also having a special card signed by all members present on the night which would then accompany the cheque to the USA.

However, as Graham was leaving before our meeting, it was decided that we would send the cheque and card on to Ken Twiss to give to Graham to present 'officially' during the Tribute.

Unfortunately, we miscalculated on the time it would take the card and cheque to travel all the way to Tacoma, and it in fact arrived two days after the Tribute ended! Ah well, so much for best laid plans.

In case you were wondering, our appeal raised just over Au$200 which came down to US$170 after currency differences were sorted out.

It would be less than honest to say that were disappointed with the response to the appeal. In fact, if it hadn't been for the exceptional generosity of one member, the sum would have been half what it was.

I know that two or three members did send money direct to the BCHS before our appeal was launched, but nonetheless, with over 300 financial members in the club, we would have hoped for something better!

If you still would like to make a donation, you certainly may. Just send them to the address shown on page 1.

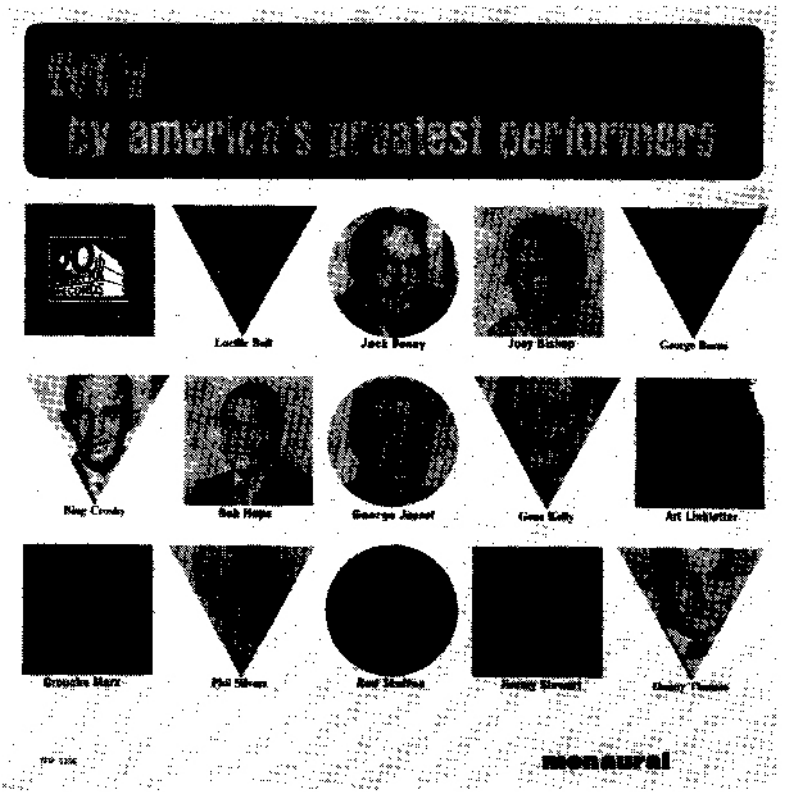
By the way, our very special thanks to Les Saynor who with only a couple of days notice, whipped up a custom-made card to send off with the cheque. Good-on-ya, Les!

KEN TWISS INTERVIEWED BY BERT NEWTON

At the end of a recent letter, Ken Twiss dropped the news that he had been interviewed for 10 minutes by Bert Newton. This would have been just before the 1983 Tribute. I missed this completely. Would any member have a taped copy I could borrow to run off a dub?

********** COLLECTOR'S **********

MY FAVOURITE STORY The first of two LP's on these pages to which Bing donated his services for charitable causes. This disc features a series of anecdotes from the people whose faces appear on the cover, linked by Bing's narration. Profits went to aid Motion Picture Relief.



******
CORNER
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THREE BILLION MILLIONAIRES was produced for the United Nations and once again featured an all-star cast. Bing got to sing on this one and produced one of his better vocal efforts for the period (1963) - "Towel of Babel". That track is on cassette BR 47 in the club cassette library.

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COLLECTOR'S CORNER
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BING AND THE DIXIELAND BANDS is hardly a rare LP but this particular issue is quite uncommon. It is produced by a long-defunct company calling itself "The Popular Record Club" and charging just 30/- per disc. The issue would seem to from the late 1950's. Anyone volunteer to clear the air?

MERRY CHRISTMAS
& CROSBY CLASSICS

We end this group of rare items with the album covers for the original 78 collections of two of Bing's best-known and most-popular sets of records. When LP's came in, both sets were transferred to extended-play 45 rpm sets and also 10" LP's. When it was decided to produce 12" LP versions of both, extra tracks were added to bring the total to 12 per disc. When stereo came in, "Merry Christmas" was 're-channeled' for stereo. BOTH LP's are still available today!
But if you think that this is some kind of record, don't forget that Bing's first solo sessions from 1931 have hardly been out of the catalogues since then!!!

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ANOTHER NEW LP FEATURING BING - AND IT'S A BEAUTY

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News has just come to hand of a new privately-issued LP from the UK. It features a combination of unissued takes, rare alternative takes and 78 issues never released in Australia. To be more specific:

Dinah (take B), We're a Couple of Soliders (blow-up), Love is Just Around the Corner (unissued take), East Side of Heaven (marvellous unissued take), Neighbours in the Sky and Can't Get Indiana off My Mind (never before in Australia), Pocketful of Dreams (unissued take), Don't let that Moon Get Away (unissued take). The following were (with one exception) never issued here: So Tall a Tree, The Girl Friend, Helpless, Ya Gotta Show Me, Then You've Never Been Blue, It Had to Be You and All She'd Say Was Umh-Hum.

The LP is entitled 'THROUGH THE YEARS' and we are importing copies for club members.

HOW TO RESERVE YOUR COPY

Just lately, the club has been laying out a fair amount of money to purchase records, and so, for the first time in a long while, we are a little low in the bank balance.

The record will cost £4.50 plus postage to Australia. As we are not sure what the final cost will be, we are asking you to send $8 DEPOSIT NOW to reserve your copy. If the final cost works out to be less than $8, we will send you a refund; if more, we'll let you know!

BUT - if you would like a copy of this great new (limited edition) LP, you must write now, with your deposit.

Interstate members, we can mail off copies to you. However, the cost will naturally be higher - probably in the region of $2 more.

You'll find our address in the front of the magazine.

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MISSING MEMBER

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As you know, every new member receives a numbered membership card. Somehow or other, we've lost track of who received CARD No. 352. If this was you, could you please drop us a line saying who you are!

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BITS 'N' PIECES

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* BING ON VIDEO WANTED

Just recently, we have had several members writing to ask whether there are any Crosby movies available on videocassette. As this club does not operate a video service at this stage, can anyone help the following with either i) Information on copies for sale, or ii) A loan of tapes. Those in need are:

LES O'DONNELL - 47 Jamieson Street, Bulimba, Queensland 4171
BOB SCHRADER - 20 Harris Road, Solomontown, Port Pirie, SA 5540
LES FAWCETT - Caravan Gardens Caravan Park, Frankston Dandenong Rd, Carrum Downs, Victoria 3201.

* CAN ANYONE HELP RICHARD PEARSON?

Richard, as you may know, is our Club rep. in the USA, and as well as being a mad-keen Crosby fan, he really enjoys PETULA CLARK and CILLA BLACK. As both have visited or about to visit Australia aboutthis time, there are sure to be plenty of radio and TV appearances to say nothing of newspaper clippings on the two.

If you are able to supply Richard with any of the above-mentioned, I'm sure that he will be happy to reciprocate with Crosby tapes from his collection. Besides which, he's a good bloke and does a lot for the club. Can you help him? (His address is on page 1)

* "THE ROAD TO LA HABRA"

An enterprising young man by the name of Gregg Hammond has just produced a rather remarkable original piece of Crosbyana. It's a 30 page spiral bound comic book featuring Bing, Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour on a new 'Road' adventure! (On the back cover of this magazine, we've sneaked in one sketch of Bing from the story. You'll find it in the lower left hand corner.)

Gregg originally produced the book for the 1983 BCHS Tacoma Tribute where it was sold for $5 a copy. Thanks to the kindness of Ken Twiss, we now have half-a-dozen copies for Australian members.

Three of these will be available for sale to members at our meeting on June 20th. The remaining three are for sale to country and interstate members at the original price of $5 each plus $1 post and packing. ($6 in all.) DO NOT send money yet but it's first come, first served and one to a customer. WRITE TODAY to reserve your copy. All proceeds will go to the BCHS Appeal.

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NEW CROSBY SOCIETY IN THE U.K.

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There is a new Bing Crosby Society in England and well worth your attention. Its title is 'The Crosby Collectors Society' and they issue a quarterly magazine 'Bingville News'. The current issue runs to 12 pages, is about the same size as ours but is professionally printed, which really makes a difference. Aimed at the collector, it features articles of interest on new record issues, discographys, movies, cigarette cards (!), etc. Cost is a reasonable £3.00 p.a.

Please make all cheques, postal orders, IMO's, etc payable to JOHN BASSETT and send them to him c/- "Bingville", 15 Oast Way, Rochford, Essex, SS4 1RZ, England.

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Other Crosby groups around the world are:

BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PO Box 8013, Tacoma, Washington, USA 98408. President: Ken Twiss.

CLUB CROSBY, PO Box 8283, Sacramento, California 95818, USA. President: Al Sutton.

INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE, 7 Greenmeadow Close, Cwmbran NP44 4PJ England. Editor: Reg Bristo.

KATHRYN CROSBY FAN CLUB, 1374 Broadway, Apt 7D, West Somerville, Ma. 02144, USA. President: Caroline Dawson.

THE SOUTHAMPTON BING CROSBY CLUB, 17 Edwina Close, Bitterne, Southampton, England. Editor: Jim Newell.

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BING LETTER FOR AUCTION

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If you are interested in obtaining an original signed letter from Bing, dated February 14, 1935, make sure you come along to our June 20th meeting. A non-member has supplied this item which he would like to make a few dollars on. The letter refers to the filming of "Mississippi", the Woodbury radio show and recording for Decca. Interesting. We'll be auctioning it after interval.

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ANECDOTE COMPETITION

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(This competition started quite by accident last issue, but seems to be catching on. The prize for the best story about yourself and Bing will win a copy of "A Bing Crosby Collection 1928 - 32" on Australian CBS (CSP 058). Deadline for entries is July 31st and the cost of mail anywhere in the world is included in the prize. Write now)

From Paul Purtell, Elwood

I'm writing this on St Patrick's Day and its appropriate because Bing was never far from the Blarney.

Back in 1966, I happened to be in Dublin. I was staying at Jury's Hotel. There was an evening show for the "big diners" who were grouped closer than ringside and far from the drink waiters. The "gang" were mainly "Irish-Yanks" soaking up nostalgia and spending big. Those of the Proletariat Party could obtain a seat reminiscent of the padded form at the old Sydney Tivoli. This was a seat normally attached to the support of the back row seats.

After the show, another American joined us and said, "I'm staying at the Gresham and so is Bing Crosby We are all going round to where Bing's living"but I said, "If you are wanting a drink, I'm a guest here at Jurys - why not have one with me".

And that's how I almost met Bing!

.....

From Frank Smith, New York

In 1944, I was stationed at Guadalcanal. One night we received the exciting news that a USO tour was going to entertain our outfit, the 6th Marine Division. Music was to be provided by Bob Crosby and his band. Bob, at that time, was a Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corps. Naturally, I made it my business to greet him and invite him to our Company area. When I told him of my friendship with Bing, he said he would drop him a note and mention our meeting in the South Pacific.

In 1945, I was wounded at Okinawa and shipped back to the Naval Hospital at Santa Marguerita Ranch, located near the Del Mar Racetrack. At the time, the track had been taken over by the goverment, but it was near Bing's home and he occasionally dropped over to keep an eye on things.

cont/.....36

GRACE & BING: an affair of the heart

This is the story that TV dares not tell . . . the true love that was hidden from Hollywood

THE scene is the darkened and nearly deserted set where a movie called Country Girl is being shot. Two people embrace in the shadows. One is a young and beautiful actress, the other a middle-aged man.

They kiss tenderly — much as close friends might — and then part. The movie is finished and they will go their separate ways.

Over the next 20 years they meet often, holding each other close, laughing, always delighted to be in each other's company.

Theirs, it is now revealed, was a love affair of the heart that brought them together briefly, saw them parted, but always remained with them.

The young actress was Grace Kelly. The man with her on that almost empty studio set was Bing Crosby.

Only now, as friends and relatives piece together the unknown jigsaw parts of their famous lives, is it becoming clear that Princess Grace and Bing held a love for each other that lasted all their lives.

It was not, friends stress, the passionate love that might have seen them give up everything to be together; instead, it was a tender, romantic kind of love.

He saw himself as having a father image for the young actress; she saw in him the experience and good humor of an older man.

Only a few members of the Country Girl crew witnessed the embrace and the kiss when the filming was over on that movie. But all agree, in retrospect, that it summed up perfectly the amazing rapport and friendship that had grown between Grace and Bing during the shooting.

Grace went on to marry Prince Rainier and Bing married another young actress Kathryn Grant, who, when she wrote her memoirs years later, told her version of Bing's love for Grace — but without mentioning Grace's name.

According to Kathryn, Bing confessed he had been having a romance and that was why he had continually been putting off their wedding date.

Kathryn's book, My Life With Bing, was one of the first public revelations of the affair.

Hollywood insiders, naturally, had talked privately about it for years but no one really knew the details.

A close friend of the late Princess says: "Grace certainly loved him after her marriage to Prince Rainier, but it was the love of a mature woman for a close friend — a friend who had helped her in troubled personal times."

More revelations have surfaced since millions of Americans recently watched the television movie Grace Kelly: An American Princess, starring Cheryl Ladd. (It will be shown here on Network 10 later this year).

Friends of the royal couple have suggested that the real story behind the courtship and wedding of the beautiful blonde film star and the Prince of Monaco was not told.

The official TV docu-drama version stressed the headline-grabbing romance and glamor of their lives.

It failed to mention that:

• The whirlwind romance was actually a carefully arranged marriage intended to save Monaco from slipping into obscurity and ruin.

• The reason the then-actress Grace Kelly prolonged her visit to Monte Carlo was actually to rendezvous with handsome French actor Jean Pierre Aumont.

• Both Grace and Prince Rainier already were involved in long-term romances when they met in May 1955: Grace was engaged to world-famous fashion designer Oleg Cassini, and Rainier had been dating beautiful French actress Gisele Pascal for six years.

According to French TV writer Jean Marie Fitere: "Rainier desperately wanted to marry Gisele, but his advisers insisted she was not suitable. She was divorced, and a Catholic leader of state must avoid marrying a divorcee at all costs."

Rainier was reluctant to break off with Gisele. In fact, he was late for his first famous meeting with Grace at the Monaco Palace because he was having lunch with Gisele at her villa in Beaulieu, 8km away.

Contrary to public belief, it was not love at first sight. The meeting, which lasted less than an hour, was apparently not very successful.

Another Hollywood actress, now retired, also revealed recently: "Grace has sensuality, and most of her leading men fell in love with her — Stewart Granger, Cary Grant, Clark Gable, Bill Holden and, of course, Bing Crosby.

"They loved her because, although she may have looked a cool customer, she was really warm — but not the goody-goody she was made out to be."

The many people who closely watched Princess Grace's marvellous control of the Rainier dynasty in Monaco attribute much of the suggested Crosby romance to Kathryn Crosby's natural jealousy at seeing Bing smiling and happy in the company of the Princess.

They say there was never a suggestion that theirs was any more than a close friendship during the Monaco years.

Those people who were expecting startling revelations from Cheryl Ladd's TV movie must remember that the script was approved by Princess Grace and was not likely to highlight past romances.

Cheryl replies to the critics who say she "whitewashed" the story by remarking that she "sought to emphasise the Cinderella-like aspects of the Princess's life".

The critics claim Cheryl and Brian should have included *all* the controversial aspects of Grace's life — the troubles with her children, her problems with Prince Rainier, her thoughts of returning to Hollywood, her early screen romances and the love she had for Bing.

But, says Cheryl: "It didn't seem important to the storyline to name everybody she went out with — we're telling of a young Philadelphia girl who wanted to be an actress, who battled to do that, and who became a princess at 26. That's the real story, surely."

(Cont. from page 33.)

Flashback: When I was in hospital, I was constantly calling in requests to the radio show that was beamed to all of the wards and so, at least 20 or 25 times a day, there would be a dedication to "Frank Smith on Ward 72." Always, a request for a song by Bing Crosby.

One afternoon, while relaxing on the Ward, an announcement came over the loudspeaker that "Smith has a visitor, Bing Crosby." Sure enough, it was Bing himself. He not only invited me as his house guest, but then had me sit in on the filming of "Blue Skies". A picture taken on that day is prominently displayed in my Chambers(Frank is a Justice of the Supreme Court of New York. BM) even now.

In 1976, when I accompanied Bing while he was in New York City for his Uris Theatre concert, I showed him this picture and we both agreed that he looked better in '76 than he did in '45 — and I looked worse, older and fatter.

It seems that after I had been evacuated, some of my friends met Bob in Japan and told him where I was located. He, in turn, wrote to Bing and that resulted in my becoming "Big Man on Hospital Campus."

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From Charles Chapman, Punchbowl

In 1947, I was working in the city and often in my lunch hour I would browse through the second hand record shops in search of old New Orleans Jazz type records and of course, any of Bings.

One day I came across a record of Paul Whiteman's "Muddy Water". At this time, I was unaware of Bing's early recordings with the Whiteman Band but as it was only sixpence, I bought it. One reaching home, I put the disc on my old windup gramophone and after hearing about two bars, took it off the turntable and tossed it into the back of my record cupboard.

About 6 months later, some friends and myself were having a few drinks and playing records when one of them asked me if I had any recordings from the 1920's. For a joke I put on "Muddy Water" and was about to stop the gramophone when someone said, "Don't take it off, play it right through." When at last it came to the vocal, it was of course Bing. When the record finished, I cleaned it within an inch of its life and very carefully put it in a very safe place. I still have it today, and it takes pride of place in my collection!

GUESS WHO? - AT 45!

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OTHER LETTERS

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From Vern Taylor, Portland.

Larry Kiner is probably going to issue an LP by Dick Todd. If you hear of anything by Todd, anywhere, from any source, I would greatly appreciate hearing about it. (Can anyone help Vern with Dick Todd radio broadcasts, etc? The address is PO Box 475, University Station, Portland, Oregon 97207-0475. USA)

From Bernard Brusey, Burwood

I wrote to Bing's widow saying how disgusted I was about Gary's book on Bing. In her reply she says: "Thank you for your beautiful letter about Bing. You expressed my exact feelings so strongly and so well. I don't know that children can ever really understand their parents and I suspect that they would all be much wiser not to judge them. Gary has great problems, but they are his own. I think it's unfortunate to put clinical documents out on the newsstands as books."

From Graham Pascoe, Bathurst

(Written prior to his trip to Tacoma)

As a matter of interest, a young lady journalist in nearby Orange learned of my planned visit to Tacoma (who was tipped off by a friend). She has a short segment each Tuesday afternoon on ABC radio's 2CR, in which she features strange happenings etc. After interviewing Shirley Naylor and me she called last Tuesday's program 'fanatics'. With my visit to Tacoma and Shirley's Crosby memorabilia collection, there was a good basis for a humourous ten minutes of chat, rounded off by Bing singing "Lovely Hula Hands".

From Ken Twiss, Tacoma

It is a great feeling to know that so many people world wide have participated in our House Appeal project. Fernando Caldas in Brazil made a collection, and Reg Bristo of the ICCin England is doing the same. I will be going to London on May 3rd to attend the Tribute by John Marshall at the Waldorf. I will also be seeing George O'Rielly, Johnny Jones, Frank Murphy, Ken Barnes, Mike Slipman, Reg Bristo, Arnold Baker and many others. Again, thanks for the very nice greeting card. It is appreciated and we know that we have many friends down under. Please thank them all for me. I wish I could write to each one.

GUESS WHO? - AT 2!
(From an old edition of Womens' Weekly - thanks Les Saynor.)

Headliners at a recent Kraft Music Hall broadcast were Bob Burns, John Erskine (author), Rose Bampton (Met. star), Bing Crosby, master of ceremonies (no hat?), Bette Davis, and Jimmy Dorsey, band leader

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FROM OUT OF THE PAST
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From Hollywood Reporter, June 16, 1931

BING CROSBY CLICK MAY LEAD TO MORE SENNETTS
Mack Sennett's enthusiasm over Bing Crosby's initial two-reel comedy, tentatively titled "I Surrender Dear" has caused the producer to plan a series of three or four shorts in which the singer-actor will star.

From Hollywood Reporter, August 25th, 1931

BING CROSBY GOES COLUMBIA NETWORK

New York - Roger Marchetti has just closed a contract with Columbia Broadcasting Company for Bing Crosby. Contract calls for the largest pay check for a sustaining artist doing radio work. In order to accomplish this, the Crosby union difficulties have been satisfactorily adjusted.

From Hollywood Reporter, September 2nd, 1931.

'BING' CROSBY BOOKED FOR PARAMOUNT N.Y. HOUSES

New York - "Bing" Crosby, baritone warbler, has been given a contract for several appearances in the New York and Brooklyn Paramount. Deal handled by Roger Marchetti at time of signing him for a sustaining program over the Columbia Broadcasting.
Crosby scheduled to make his first appearance last night, muffed through case of laryngitis. Starts tonight.

From Hollywood Reporter, January 14th, 1932.

BING CROSBY HELD OVER

New York - "Bing" Crosby has been signed for ten more weeks of personal appearances at the New York Paramount.

From Citizen News, December 18th, 1933

CROSBY SINGS TRAFFIC BLUES

Bing Crosby had good reason to croon a blues number today. Tucked away in his wallet was a traffic citation. Patrolman JH.Ransom gave him the ticket for assertedly stopping his car in a "no parking" zone near the Paramount Studio. The officer also cited the singer

for being without his operator's card. Mr Crosby gave his address as 4326 Froman Street, North Hollywood.

From The Daily News, March 21st, 1934

CROSBY TO FORM OWN PHONOGRAPH RECORD COMPANY

Bing Crosby is to form his own recording company, reliable authorities said yesterday. Already he has scheduled his own music publishing house (Select Music company). Several of the Brunswick staff may join Crosby in his newest venture. And from his view, why shouldn't the famed crooner have his own company? His records lead all others in sales continually.

(In fact, it was Jack Kapp from Brunswick who was to form the new company, not Bing. The label was called 'Decca'.)

From un-named paper, September 6th, 1935

CROSBY HORSES ARRIVE FOR WINTER SEASON

Two interesting notes in connection with the horse racing situation were sounded yesterday. Dr Charles H Strub, impressario of the pony pasture at Santa Anita, returns the 15th inst. with an armful of entries from the East. A carload of horses belonging to Bing Crosby, the crooner, were loaded from Southern Pacific cars at Alhambra last night.

It's still some time before the first bugle sounds at Santa Anita, Christmas Day to be exact, but the activity in advance of the impending season is terrific.

Crosby's move is a challenge to other stars of the movie world who have entered the ranks of horse owners - Constance Bennett, Joe E. Brown, Dave Butler, Clark Gable, Leon Gordon and others.

With an eye to the future, Crosby and his agents invaded the Saratoga sales market and bought up some of the finest bred colts and fillies offered at that famous annual venue.

There were nine thoroughbreds in the Crosby consignment which was unloaded last night. Crosby's first venture into the racing game was the purchase of Zombi, a two-year old from the Greentree establishment. He added others at auction until now his stable numbers a score in round numbers, including the bluebloods he picked up at Saratoga.

Extracts from Photoplay, April 1937

THE ALL STAR STORY OF THE COCOANUT GROVE

The Grove was a flourishing institution when Abe "Dad" Frank , the manager, hired the Three Rhythm Boys, Harry Barris, Al Rinker and Bing Crosby as entertainers. He paid them each fifty dollars a week.

At the start, no one would have chosen Bing as the most likely to succeed in the trio. Some of the Grove girls called him "poached egg eyes" and thought the others were better looking members. But that was before they heard Bing sing.

It wasn't long before Bing had a rabid following of fans, and a rabidly worried manager. For sad to relate, most of Bing's salary went on liquid refreshments. Time and again the Grove would send out searching parties for Bing and haul him to the place for his performance.

Once behind a microphone, Bing never had any trouble crooning. The crowd would clamor for "It Must Be True" and Bing's liquid notes would pour forth joyously. Bing's derelictions were a source of grief to Dixie Lee, who was engaged to marry him, and today he credits her with showing him the error of his ways.

One of Bing's pals then, as today, was Jack Oakie. They maintained bachelor quarters together at Malibu Beach, and Jack's visits to the Grove were so frequent as to indicate he thought he was on the payroll too.

So one night, Jack was put to work. Bing had been delayed, avoidably delayed, and "Dad" Frank took Bing to task. Their arguement, staged behind the orchestra platform, showed no signs of quieting down long enough for Bing to sing. By this time, the crowd was getting impatient for the crooner. In desperation, Ben Frank, the son of Abe, and his successor to the business, seized Oakie.

"Get up in front of that mike and say something" begged Ben.

Oakie could hardly wobble, let alone warble, but he got to the platform and the Oakie wit, as usual, proved equal to the occasion. He kidded the crowd along until the sound and fury of Bing's battle behind the thin partition of the runway, grew to such proportions that Oakie's efforts were drowned out. Oakie gave up, stepped from the platform, and fell flat on his face!

From Coronet, April 1952

BING'S BIG BREAK

Late one night in 1930, a small group of technicians and actors jammed a sound stage at United Artists Studios in Hollywood. Movies had just learned to talk but this one had to sing as well.

Joseph M Schenk and Edmund Goulding, producer and director of 'Reaching for the Moon' had rehearsed Bebe Daniels in a new Irving Berlin song "When the Folks High Up Do that Mean Low Down", but the jazzy number didn't suit Miss Daniels' cultered coloratura. Take after take was a flop.

"What shall we do" moaned Schenck, eyeing the mammoth crew and waiting set and mentally adding up the combined salaries. "If we blow this day, we blow $40,000!"

Goulding thought a moment. "I heard three guys sing at the Cocoanut Grove the other night," he said. "Ithink one of them would be great for this number." "Get him!" shouted Schenck.

So at 11.30 p.m. a car sped to the Cocoanut Grove nightclub to bring back an obscure vocalist named Bing Crosby. Thrust into a scene of bedlam, Crosby calmed everyone down with the casual confidence that since has become one of his trademarks. In less than an hour, he learned the song, suggested several orchestral changes to fit his style, then announced "I'm ready."

"Here, put this on," Goulding said, tossing Crosby a sports jacket. "Now just stand over there and let's try it. The next few minutes then amazed the moviemakers. They rehearsed the song and the scene, and filmed it in a single perfect 'take'. Finished, Crosby put on his own jacket and began to leave.

"Wait a minute," Goulding said. He reached into his pocket and handed Crosby a crumpled bill. "Thanks Bing". "A pleasure," drawled the crooner.

Driving home later, Goulding turned to Schenck. "By the way Joe," he said, "you owe me some money." "What for?" asked Schenck. "That Crosby guy," said Goulding. "I gave him a hundred bucks."

Thus, Bing Crosby starred in his first motion picture - and started on his first million dollars. END
(And that's a fine example of 'history as she should have been'.)See you on the 20th!

Bob Mallen

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BACK PAGE SPECIAL
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CARTOONS OF BING

Over the decades, there must have been hundreds if not thousands of cartoons and charactatures of Bing. Here are half-a-dozen ranging from the early 1930's to the late 1960's.